



FOR REMOTE WORKERS AND DIGITAL NOMADS

The Remote Worker's Island

2026 EDITION

Why the ferry beats the freeway, and Vancouver stays in reach.

Travis Bach and Kiel Bach

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WELCOME

An office with an ocean view

We're Travis and Kiel Bach, and a growing share of the people we move to the Island work from home, many of them from Vancouver, New Westminster, and across the Lower Mainland. Their jobs came with them, so the only question left was where they actually wanted to live. The answer, more and more, is here.

Here's the thinking, plainly: Nanaimo can be a satellite to downtown Vancouver in a way the Fraser Valley never quite manages. The difference is the trip in. Instead of crawling the freeway, you ride a ferry with a coffee and your laptop, and you do it a few times a month instead of every day. This guide is about that trade, and the life on the other side of it.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- ✓ Why remote workers are trading the city for the Island, and what they gain.
- ✓ Getting to Vancouver when you need to, and how often you'll really go.
- ✓ Choosing a home, a workspace, and a neighbourhood that fit the way you work.

YOUR ISLAND TEAM



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THE DRAW

Why your job should move here

When work came untethered from the office, a lot of people realized they were paying a fortune to live near a commute they no longer had. Here is what they trade up to.

More home, and room to breathe. The condo budget that bought a one-bedroom by the SkyTrain often buys a house with a yard and a real office here, frequently with money left over.

The commute, flipped. You keep Vancouver in reach but stop paying for it daily. A ferry ride a few times a month replaces a freeway you used to sit in twice a day.

A lunch break worth taking. Because the work is at home, the breaks happen on a trail, a beach, or the water. The day bends around the place, not the office tower.

The same paycheque, a longer reach. When your income comes from away and your costs drop here, the gap is yours to keep. We'll run your real numbers against what you're leaving behind.

WHAT WE HEAR MOST

People expect to miss the city and are surprised how little they do, and how fast the slower rhythm becomes the entire point. The ones who land happiest came in knowing they'd go to Vancouver sometimes, not never.

THE CONNECTION

When you do go in

The freeway is not the only way to the city, and from the Central Island it usually isn't the best one. Here are the ways across, fastest first.

The Hullo passenger ferry **downtown to downtown**

A foot-passenger ferry from Nanaimo's waterfront to downtown Vancouver in about seventy-five minutes, no car and no parking. Work the whole way over and step off near the meeting.

Seaplanes **the quick hop**

Harbour Air and others fly from Nanaimo Harbour to downtown Vancouver in roughly half an hour, the fastest door-to-door option for a tight day in the city.

Helijet **when timing is everything**

Scheduled helicopter service adds another fast, weather-resilient way across the strait for the days that simply can't slip.

BC Ferries **when you need the car**

Departure Bay to Horseshoe Bay runs about ninety-five minutes, with Duke Point to Tsawwassen a little longer. If you'll cross often, an Assured Loading card guarantees a spot so you're never stuck in the lineup.

THE REAL MATH

How often, really

The honest question isn't how you get to Vancouver, it's how often you actually need to. For most remote workers, far less than they fear. Here's the picture by pattern.

A few times a year. If you're fully remote and only go in for the odd all-hands or client visit, the trip is a non-issue, a pleasant day out on the ferry or a quick seaplane there and back.

Once or twice a month. The most common pattern. Easy to plan around sailings, cheap enough, and frankly a nice change of scene. You'll start treating the city as an outing, not an obligation.

Once a week. Very doable if you live near a terminal and build the day around the schedule. The foot ferry or a seaplane makes it a working commute, not a lost day.

Every day. The one pattern that doesn't fit. If your job truly needs you downtown daily, the Island isn't the answer yet, and we'll tell you so.

THE FERRY BEATS THE FREEWAY

An hour on a ferry where you can answer email, read, or just watch the water beats the same hour gripping a wheel in stop-and-go traffic. Same time, a completely different day. That's the trade at the heart of this move.

THE LIFELINE

Staying connected

For remote work, the internet is the job. The good news is that the Central Island is better wired than people expect, with a backup plan for the gaps.

Fibre and high speed, in most towns. Nanaimo and the larger centres have fibre and fast cable in most neighbourhoods. We can help you check what actually reaches a specific address, because it varies street to street.

A backup for the rural edge. On acreages and in the hills, satellite internet has changed the game, giving genuinely fast service where the lines don't run. Many remote workers out of town run it as a primary or a backup.

Plan for the winter storm. Island winters bring the odd power outage. A small battery backup for your router and a plan for a workday off-grid is worth sorting before you need it.

CHECK THE ADDRESS, NOT THE TOWN

Connectivity is the one thing worth confirming property by property. Tell us it's a dealbreaker and we'll verify what's available at a specific home before you fall for the view.

THE HOME

A home that works for work

When the house is also the office, a few features matter far more than they otherwise would. Here's what we look for with remote buyers.

A real office, not a corner. A dedicated room with a door is the difference between focus and the kitchen table. For two-income remote households, two quiet spaces is the brief.

Light and quiet for calls. A room with good natural light that isn't over the laundry or the road makes every video call better. Background and sound matter more than people think.

Room to grow a studio. A lot that could take a garden office or a converted garage gives you a separate workspace down the line, and a separate entrance if clients ever visit.

Online fast, set up once. We steer you toward homes wired for the way you work, so you're up and running within days of the keys, not weeks.

TELL US HOW YOU WORK

Calls all day, or heads-down focus? One office or two? Clients to the door, or never? Tell us first, and we read every listing through that lens, so you don't tour homes that can't hold your workday.

FINDING YOUR FIT

Where remote workers land

Most people settle between two or three areas. A few starting points, by what tends to matter when you work from home and cross to the city now and then.

Closest to the city: Departure Bay. Steps from the Hullo, the seaplanes, and the ferry, with the hospital, shopping, and the airport close. The natural choice in Nanaimo if you'll cross often.

Walkable and full of character: the Old City. Nanaimo's heritage quarter, cafes and a short stroll to the waterfront, for people who want to work near a coffee and a community.

Quiet value just outside town: Cedar, Lantzville, Ladysmith. A little more land, a little less money, and an easy run to the terminals when you need them.

A younger, outdoor crowd: Comox Valley and Cumberland. Mountain biking, a creative streak, and its own airport for the longer hops, popular with a younger remote set.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD IS THE DECISION

Within Nanaimo alone, the right street depends on how close you want to be to a terminal, how walkable you like it, and where the fast internet runs. This is exactly where local knowledge earns its keep, and where we come in.

THE PAYOFF

A week, the Island way

The point of all of it is the shape of an ordinary week, when the office is at home and the city is a ferry away.

A FAIRLY ORDINARY WEEK

Monday: at the desk by eight, a walk on the beach at lunch.

Tuesday: the foot ferry to Vancouver for a day of meetings, home by dinner.

Wednesday: heads-down at home, a paddle from the harbour after the last call.

Thursday: a co-working morning in town, trails in the afternoon.

Friday: an early finish and the long evening light, the mountains close.

Weekend: the market, the water, and not a freeway in sight.

This is the trade. You give up being in the city every day and gain a life with the city still in it. For the right person, that isn't a compromise, it's the whole reason to come.

THE FIRST WEEKS

Set up to work from day one

- ✓ Confirm the internet at the exact address before you remove conditions.
- ✓ Book the fibre or satellite install early, since dates can run weeks out.
- ✓ Pick a home with a real office, or the room to build one.
- ✓ Set up a ferry or seaplane account, and an Assured Loading card if you'll cross often.
- ✓ Find a co-working spot or a regular cafe so you're not working alone every day.
- ✓ Plan one trip to view and choose, and let us handle the rest from here.
- ✓ Walk the waterfront at dusk in your first week. It's the quickest way to know you chose right.

HOW WE HELP

Bring the job, find the home

We're guides first. Tell us how you work, how often you'll cross to the city, and what your week should look like, and we'll match you to the right home, the right workspace, and the right neighbourhood, then help you land so the work never skips a beat. We've helped a lot of people make exactly this move, and we love watching the city stress fall away.

TALK IT THROUGH WITH US



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Book a 20-minute call, or explore listings and area guides at bachrealestate.ca

PLEASE NOTE

This guide is a general overview to help you plan, not financial or travel advice. Ferry and flight schedules, fares, internet availability, and services are current at the time of writing and they change, so please confirm the latest with the carriers and providers before you rely on them.

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